

Parent Newsletter

Headstart, Early Headstart, Home Based H.S., Expectant Moms Program, Special Education, Early Intervention, Ezra Medical Center

Y V Y HEADSTART

Here at YVY we are anticipating the next National Head Start annual Training Conference more than usual. This conference, which brings together Head Start personnel and parents from Head Start centers all over the country, features varied workshops and presentations which address all facets of Head Start. All those who attend come away with a deeper understanding of their roles and obligations as Head Start providers. This year, the conference's thirtieth, it is being held on our own home turf, at three different hotels in New York City. YVY is sending a large delegation from its various divisions to attend pertinent workshops on topics ranging from Quality Infant-Toddler Services to Father Involvement.

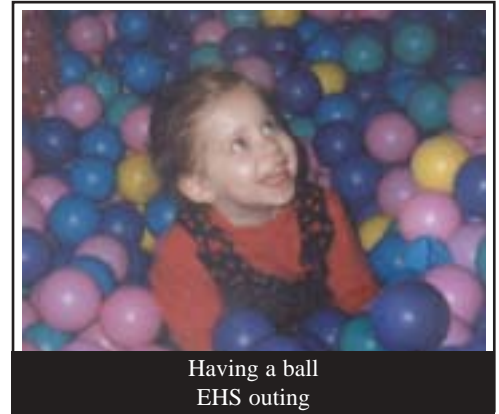
In addition to this, we are pleased to report that staff from our very own Early Head Start will be among those presenting. Early Head Start Program Coordinator Devora Barnett, Health Coordinator Janie Friedman, and Childbirth Educator Anita Brecher will present a workshop entitled Expectant Mom's Club: Nurturing Mothers, where they will describe our very successful and pioneering Expectant Mom's program to those who wish to start such a program in their own centers.



EHS Socialization

One popular feature of the Head Start Conference is the opportunity to visit Head Start centers in the host city. We are very

proud that Y V Y 's Farragut Road site has been chosen as one of the sites to be visited this year. A tour bus will bring interested conference attendees to the site. We look forward to greeting them all.



Having a ball
EHS outing

YVY staff also participated in training to upgrade its internal record-keeping system. YVY Head Start will now be using the HSFIS (Head Start Family Information System) program so that its record keeping will be aligned with that of Head Start centers nationally. (YVY Early Head Start has been using the HSFIS program since its inception). The training was provided by the Head Start Quality Improvement Center (QUIC) at New York University.

YVY's Policy Council met on March 30. Parent representatives to the Policy Council are elected from and by site representatives who are themselves elected by parents in their respective sites. At Policy Council meetings, parent members meet, together with community representatives and relevant YVY staff, to discuss matters of importance to YVY. Together with YVY's Board and in consultation with experts, they make decisions on matters such as general policy, selection of new sites, expansion, personnel and curriculum changes, and fiscal matters. Parents have the primary interest in assuring that YVY works well for their children, and their importance in aiding the success of the program cannot be overstated. At this meeting, some matters that came up for discussion were Head Start's annual mandated self assessment and how it would be conducted, budget approvals, and updates on new construction and expansion plans.

YVY's Health Services Advisory Committee held one of its bi-annual meetings in early May. The Health Services Advisory Committee is comprised of representatives from all of YVY's divisions, local physicians and other health and mental health

YELED V'YALDA EARLY
CHILDHOOD CENTER, INC.
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Yeled V'Yalda is pleased to welcome Dr. Garey V. Ellis to its staff. Dr. Ellis will serve as YVY's Director of Health Services and Family and Community Partnerships, helping YVY improve the quality of its services and develop Health Services initiatives. Dr. Ellis wishes to share the following with the YVY family.



Garey V. Ellis, MD,

Greetings to the Parents and Staff of Yeled v'Yalda:

I am honored and delighted to become part of the Yeled v'Yalda family. I appreciate the opportunity to work with such a knowledgeable group of individuals, all dedicated to taking care of our most precious resource, our children. Working with YVY is a wonderful opportunity for me to continue what I have been doing for many years, in a variety of capacities. I believe it would be helpful to tell you a little about myself so that we can start to know each other better.

I grew up in Brooklyn in a family very much like those served by YVY: low-income but high standards. After overcoming many obstacles, I achieved my dream of becoming a physician. I realized, then, that I could contribute most through preventive care, by helping children to develop in both health and education. Seven years ago I founded Inner Force, a non-profit organization serving children in the Brooklyn community in which I grew up. Inner Force's goal has been to enlist everyone as part of the child's "team"--- parents, educators, health professionals, corporations.

Most recently, I have served as Medical Advisor to the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Human Services in Washington, DC. It was in this position that I was privileged to meet Solomon Igel, CEO of YVY, and I found how much we had in common in our ideas of how to serve children. I was very impressed to learn about all the wonderful things that YVY is doing. It is truly a model of what a community program for children should be.

Yeled v'Yalda is in the forefront when it comes to serving children, with its Headstart, Early Headstart, and other valuable programs. The quality of its leadership is what has most inspired me to become a member of the YVY team. I am excited to lend my hand in forging community partnerships and expanding medical care. In the months ahead, I look forward to working closely with all of you, the parents and staff of YVY, to continue making YVY's vision a reality.

professionals, and parents. Its function is to develop linkages between the agency and the community, to assure accessibility of services to YVY parents and children, and to suggest health related policies for the agency to follow. At this meeting, committee members discussed how to improve communication with local pediatricians so that health forms are filled out properly and necessary referrals can be made. Dr. Harold Friedman, who heads Vision Care services at Ezra Medical Center, acquainted the committee with Vision Therapy Rehabilitation and what it can accomplish. The next meeting of the committee will take place in the fall.

Dr. Eliezer Kaminetsky, YVY's Director of Mental Health, gave the first of a series of workshops entitled "Focus on the Father " this past March. In addition to teaching fathers stress reduction skills, Dr. Kaminetsky focused on practical strategies for teaching discipline to children. The method that Dr. Kaminetsky reviewed is called Behavioral Rehearsal, where chil-

dren are taught discipline not as a punishment, but as a rehearsed, learned skill. The role of fathers as teachers was stressed, and ways to balance the many responsibilities that fathers have were suggested. The workshop was very successful. Dr. Kaminetsky will continue this series geared towards fathers in the fall.

EARLY HEAD START 

Two of Early Head Start's newest center-based caregivers have just received their CDA (Child Development Associate) certificates. Recipients of this certificate, a national credential granted by the Council for Professional Recognition, must undergo many hours of training in care of infants and toddlers and take both written and oral examinations. They must also present a portfolio of lesson plans and teaching materials for approval. We thank Goldie Monheit and Miriam Devries for their efforts and congratulate them on their achievement. This credentialing gives our program a high degree of professionalism

YELED V'YALDA in the News

Yeled V'Yalda's Farragut Road site was recently featured on the front page of a nationally distributed weekly.

and demonstrates our commitment to delivering the highest quality care to our children.

An In-Service training seminar was held for Early Head Start staff in March. Ina Bransome, a New Parent Mentor, presented Parenting with Presence. This program is designed to teach mothers about newborn/maternal bonding and to instruct them in how to make their newborns feel calm and reassured. Michal Noam, YVY Physical Therapist, also presented. Her presentation stressed the importance of having babies strengthen their upper bodies in order to prevent later problems in many areas of physical development. Ongoing training and development equip YVY's Home Visitors with the tools to help new mothers care for their infants and toddlers.



Richard B. Levine

Preschool children of various ethnicities and religions learn to make Passover matzoh at Tzivos Hashem's Traveling Model Matzoh Bakery at the Yeled v'yalda Head Start in Canarsie, Brooklyn.

YVY SPECIAL SERVICES

YVY Special Services Department- including Special Education and Early Intervention-works hard to provide quality services to every child it services. In order to enhance the quality of its services, a questionnaire was sent out to parents of all YVY children and to all YVY therapists. The parent questionnaire asked parents to rate their satisfaction with the services they are receiving and solicited feedback on how services could be improved. The therapists were asked to comment both on therapeutic and technical issues. Most of the questionnaires were filled out and returned. YVY Special Services was pleased to find that overall satisfaction was high, both for those who receive services and those who give them. Some suggestions were offered and were already implemented where possible. YVY thanks all parents and therapists who took the trouble to fill out this questionnaire.

Professional Development

Devora Samet, MS, Behavioral Consultant to Parents and Educators, presented a workshop on How to Set Up Effective Behavioral and Social Skills Programs for Children. Ms. Samet discussed proven learning theories and their application to cognitive-behavioral social skills training. She demon-

strated how to set up a program to teach targeted skills and provide creative reinforcement. The presentation included hands-on modeling, role-playing, and practice. Ms. Samet also provided attendees with a list of resources and a packet of materials so that ideas could immediately be put to use. The workshop was well attended by both YVY professionals and professionals from outside the agency.

Dr. Tzipporah Sklar, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Neurology and Director of the Division of Developmental Pediatrics at SUNY Downstate Medical Center, now affiliated with Ezra Medical Center, presented a workshop on Well Care and Development of the High Risk Infant. Dr. Sklar's presentation was originally scheduled for President's Day, the day New York City had its worst snowstorm in years. The workshop, of course, had to be rescheduled for a new date. Despite this, attendance was high, as was interest. Dr. Sklar described normal developmental milestones in physical growth and development and delineated the risk factors for neuro-developmental impairment. She then alerted therapists to red flags in neuro-development and spoke to them about the significance of follow-up treatments and referrals. Parents of children with developmental problems were also invited to this session. See Dr. Sklar's article on how physicians observe newborns in the magazine section of this newsletter.

EZRA MEDICAL CENTER

Ezra Medical is pleased to announce the expansion of its Dentistry Department. Ezra now has a team of three dentists, including a pediatric dentist. In addition to regular dentistry, Ezra's dentists do cosmetic procedures like bleaching and other cosmetic dentistry. Ezra also now has a female dermatologist, Dr. Andrea Cambio, in response to patients who have requested this service. Ezra continues to offer a full range of services, including pediatrics and adolescent medicine, developmental pediatrics, internal medicine, optometry and vision therapy rehabilitation, radiology, and podiatry. Ezra also offers full audiological testing and speech therapy for both children and adults.

Ezra Medical currently participates with the following insurance: Medicaid, Medicare, Americhoice, Blue Cross, Oxford, GHI, Child Health Plus, Health Plus, Magna Care, PHCS, Wellcare, Multiplan, Cigna, First Health, Guardian, Doral, Aetna/USHC, and Local 1199. Ezra is currently working on adding other insurers to this list of participants.

YVY IN STATEN ISLAND

The newest addition to YVY Staten Island, Silver Lake II, has gotten off to a wonderful start. Four Head Start classrooms as well as an Early Head Start toddler classroom are in full operation. By September 2000, an additional classroom for one-year-olds and a Mommy & Me group for special needs children will be added. The facility is a welcome addition to the Park Hill/Stapleton areas of Staten Island, which were reported to be the numbers one and two lowest income areas in Staten Island in the 2000 Census. As word of Silver Lake Head Start's expansion has spread throughout the community, the waiting list for enrollment has ballooned.

With the addition of Silver Lake II, YVY's original site at 10 Gregg Place has been able to service families from the Port Richmond Area of Staten Island. This area is unique in Staten Island in that it is home to a high concentration of day laborers and their families. Most of the families are of Mexican or South American heritage. The staff at Silver Lake has met the challenge and has become bi-lingual. Spanish-speaking staff members have been hired and other staff has been making a great effort to brush up on the language. With the new focus on emergent literacy, Silver Lake Head Start is giving its children the foundation they will need to enter the Public School system.

DIRECTORY

For more information on any of Yeled V'Yalda's services, please call the following numbers:

Headstart: (718) 686-3750

Early Headstart: (718) 686-3750

Special Education: (718) 686-3700 ext. 1
ABA Program: (718) 686-3700 ext. 539

Early Intervention: (718) 686-3700 ext. 516

Ezra Medical Center: (718) 686-7600
Vision Screening: (718) 686-7600
Audiology: (718) 686-7600
Speech Therapy: (718) 686-3700 ext. 115

YELED V'YALDA STATEN ISLAND:

*Silver Lake Headstart,
10 Gregg Place (718) 815-4488*

*Silver Lake Headstart II,
20 Park Hill Circle (718) 720-0090*



**Yeled V'Yalda
Mental Health Hotline**
Mondays 11- 3

**686-3750
Ext. 125**

All calls are confidential

You do not need to give your name



Parent Magazine

The Art of Observation

by
Tzipporah Sklar, M.D.

Babies are universes unto themselves. From the very youngest age - even immediately after birth - they have the ability to respond to their surroundings and cope with their new environments in a multitude of ways. They can feel, move and make sounds. They demonstrate affect, cognition, behavior, spontaneous muscle activation, body alignment and even language. Because they are such complex beings from the very beginning, observing the activities of newborns provides doctors and parents with a great deal of important information.

All parents hope that their baby will come into the world adequately prepared to deal with all the challenges he or she will have to face. Unfortunately, there are some newborns who begin their young lives with different kinds of developmental challenges that require early intervention. Statistics have shown that an estimated 5% - 10% of infants are at risk for a wide range of developmental disabilities, ranging from motor or speech and language delays, feeding difficulties, or visual perceptual disorders to cerebral palsy or other neurological disorders. Even subtle developmental disabilities can impact significantly on a child's development and affect his or her inclusion in the home, at school, and in the community.

Developmental milestones are often used as a guideline to determine if an infant is on target in his or her neurological development. However, even if a baby achieves developmental milestones in the appropriate, timely fashion, this does not preclude later developmental difficulties. There may still be problems with the "quality" of the baby's response. Developmental testing in infancy and early childhood is often limited in its accuracy and predictive value. Tests also do not reflect the behavioral or physiological factors that impact on the baby's performance.

Early detection of problems in an infant's development is, therefore, complex. But, observation, or "intense informed scrutiny," when performed by a trained physician, is an excellent way of evaluating a newborn for developmental disorders. By using the art of observation, a physician can assess the maturity and integrity of a baby's nervous system and look for subtle signs of developmental deficits that might otherwise be missed.



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Dr. Sklar is Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Neurology and Director of the Division of Developmental Pediatrics at SUNY Downstate Medical Center, where she also heads the Multidisciplinary Neurodevelopmental Clinic for High-Risk Infants. Dr. Sklar is available for pediatric evaluations at Ezra Medical Center (718)686-7600.

In order to assess a newborn's nervous system, a trained physician will observe the baby in six different states: quiet sleep, active sleep, drowsy sleep, quiet alert, fussy and crying. Although these states can be affected by a variety of physical conditions like temperament, hunger, thirst, illness, temperature, or medicine, the physician will still be able gain an understanding of the baby's range of functioning.

A baby's ability to transition from a sleep to an awake state and to maintain a quiet alert state, or the extent of the baby's jitteriness or irritability, all give the physician clues as to the maturity of his or her nervous system. Watching how a baby coordinates his sucking, swallowing and breathing responses gives the physician a wealth of information about the baby's brainstem function, cranial nerves, and neuromotor/sensory integration.

To determine the quality of a newborn's neuromotor function, the physician will observe the baby in eight different positions: supine, side-lying, prone, pulling to sit, standing, suspended horizontally, and parachuting forward. Observing the baby in these positions will give the physician a great deal of insight into a baby's tone, balance, postural alignment, ability to bear and shift weight and move against gravity, ability to reach and grasp, and ability to do visual tracking.

Another very important aspect of evaluation by artful observation is conducting a "dialogue" with the newborn baby. The baby's ability to make eye contact, follow the physician's facial expressions, and respond to his or her parent's voice are all important signs of the baby's cognitive potential and future ability to communicate.

Only 2%-5% of premature babies weighing between 1000 and 1500 grams have major developmental disabilities. 50% of these babies have no disabilities at all. However, if a child has a neurodevelopmental disorder and it is left undetected, the child can develop patterns of movement that can gradually stiffen muscle control, limit his or her range of movement, and significantly restrict the variety

of his or her learning experiences. For example, infants with high or low oromotor tone can have problems with sucking, swallowing and breathing that may result in their failure to thrive. Early detection of these problems allows for intervention - correction of poor posture and body alignment and sensory motor integration. This intervention can help prevent the cycles of illness, hospitalization, and despair that frequently plague these children and their families.

When a disability is identified, early intervention is the key to overcoming obstacles and achieving a child's full potential. A baby's pediatrician and parents are partners in his or her healthy development. By mastering the art of observation and listening to a parent's concerns and experiences, a physician can play a pivotal role in detecting developmental abnormalities early on.

Parents can be active participants in this process by knowing their infant's baseline and developmental milestones and being aware of their infant's neurodevelopmental status from the very beginning. Parents, too, must be alert observers. They must trust their instincts and not hesitate to report any concerns they have regarding their child's development to their baby's physician. Together, the physician and the parents can determine the need for early interventions that will pave the way for their child's healthy development.



The vast majority of infants requiring early intervention do well. Infants do especially well when appropriate therapeutic interventions and behavioral

approaches are implemented consistently both in the home as well as in the therapeutic environment. While the rate of development for each child is determined by the child's individual diagnosis and genetic predisposition, the family's support, acceptance, encouragement, and advocacy make the greatest difference in the child's ability to achieve the best overall quality of life.

Let's talk about ...

From time to time, we will bring you informative articles written by our YVY Special Services providers, drawing on their experience in the field. Here is the first of these articles.

Speech/Language Therapy

Before any therapy can begin, goals must be set. The therapist then looks for the most efficient ways for these goals to be achieved. Here, Ruth Gaerman, one of YVY's speech providers, explains how play can help achieve therapeutic goals.

How Are Goals Achieved ?

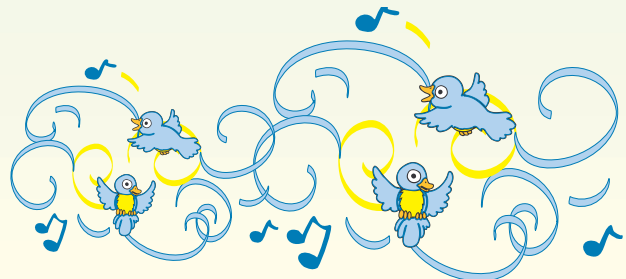
Most often, language flourishes in natural, everyday settings. What is considered "natural" will, of course, differ with each particular age. As such, a nursery or kindergarten child, who normally spends most of his day squatting beside dump trucks or creating masterpieces while knuckle-deep in paint and glue, will need that same kind of structured free play in order to facilitate his therapeutic goals. Even oral-motor therapy (therapy designed to strengthen the tongue, lips, and jaw), while targeting specific muscle groups so necessary for speech production, can look like somebody's having a party -- complete with blowing horns, twisted straws, and the chewiest or crunchiest food treats one can imagine! Older children also benefit more from working within the framework of games and contests, rather than working with long lists of unattached words.

Parents are particularly important in helping their children achieve the goals set for them. No one can simulate the natural environment in which a child's skills can flourish as well as the parents because they are the child's natural environment. Within this environment there are

many opportunities to help a child use language in a "fun" way. On a trip to the doctor, the child can be prompted to comment on "big/little" trucks, or "red/yellow/blue" cars. At home or at the supermarket, he can be asked to name foods that start with specific letters in a game where he gets "points." The opportunities for practicing language in a playful context are limited only by the parent's imagination - and consultation with the speech therapist.

We are all more ready to express ourselves verbally when we are more relaxed. A child is no different. He will be more apt to use his language skills when he is having fun

When your child needs therapy, he may be using the toys/games of his choice, but the therapist (or parent) has the goals of her choice in mind. It may look like play, but it works!





PARENT ACTIVITIES

SUN. JUNE 1,

EXP. MOMS PROGRAM

Exerc. & Childbirth Ed. by Chana Brecher
"Making It Happen Part 2"

by Dr. E Kaminetsky

571 McDonald Ave., 10:45-1:00

TUES. JUNE 3,

EHS/HS Swim

at Boro Park YM/YWHA

11:00 A. M.-12:00 Noon

TUES. JUNE 10,

EHS SOCIALIZATION

10:00 A.M.- 2:00 P.M.

WED. JUNE 11,

Parenting Workshop by Bessie Morris, CSW
6012 Farragut Rd. 9:30 A.M.-11:00 A.M.

WED. JUN. 11

Parent Committee Meeting
10 Gregg Place



Parent Workshop
"AEROBICS"

571 McDonald,
11:30A.M. -12:30 P.M.

SUN. JUNE 15,

EXP. MOMS PROGRAM

Exerc. & Childbirth Ed. by Chana Brecher
571 McDonald, 10:45-1:00

TUES. JUNE 17

EXP. MOMS PROGRAM

Symposium "Postpartum Depression - How to Deal with It"

Parenting skills for Post-partum moms by Janie Friedman,RN

SUN, MARCH 16,

Exp. Moms Program

Exerc. & Childbirth Ed. by Chana Brecher
Parenting skills for Post-partum moms by Janie Friedman,RN

571 McDonald Ave., 10:45-1:00

WED. JUNE 18

Parenting Workshop by Bessie Morris, CSW
571 McDonald Ave.

10:00 A.M.-12:00 noon

FRI. JUNE 27,

STEP-UP CELEBRATION – S.I.

For Four Yr. Old Children & their Families

10:00 A.M.-12:00 noon

PROFESSIONAL WORKSHOPS

TUES. JUNE 3,

FINAL SEIT CLUSTER MEETING

1450-37 St.

8:00-9:30 P.M

MON. JUNE 9

PROF. STAFF WORKSHOP

"Vision Therapy"

Dr. Harold Friedman

571 McDonald Ave.

7:00-9:00 P.M

MON, JUNE 2

Policy Council Meeting



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